Let’s Talk

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SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY UNDERLYING ADULT LEARNING (SEQUAL): A NEW TOOL FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE)
University of California, Berkeley

April 16, 2014
AGENDA

• Introduction
• Logistics/Agenda Review
• Why SEQUAL
• How we developed SEQUAL
• How SEQUAL Works
• Discussion: Using SEQUAL for Continuous Quality Improvement
• Next Steps for SEQUAL
PARTICIPANTS

Presenters

Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D.
Director, CSCCE
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Laura Sakai, Ph.D.
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Discussants

Deborah Cassidy, Ph.D., Professor,
Department of Human Development and Family Studies, University of North Carolina, Greensboro; Principal Investigator, North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project

George Phillip, Senior Program Associate, WestEd, Coordinator QRIS Santa Clara County, CA

Peggy Haack, Outreach Coordinator at Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

Moderator:
Lea J.E. Austin, Specialist, CSCCE
WHAT TEACHERS NEED

- Teaching supports
  - Planning, reflection time
  - Appropriate materials and curriculum
  - More and better staff
- Learning community
  - Professional development/training
  - Mentoring/coaching
- Job Crafting
  - Decision making opportunities

- Adult Well Being
  - Better pay and financial supports
  - Feeling valued, heard and being supported

- Leadership
  - Supportive administrators/directors
FIVE SEQUAL DOMAINS

1. **Teaching Supports** - Curriculum and Child Assessment, Materials, Support Services for Children and Families, Staffing

2. **Learning Community** - Professional Development Opportunities, Applying Learning

3. **Job Crafting** - Making Decisions in Your Classroom, Teamwork, Input into Your Workplace

4. **Adult Well-Being** - Economic Well-Being, Wellness Supports, Quality of Work Life

5. **Program Leadership** - Supervisor, Leader
WHY THE FIELD NEEDS SEQUAL

• Lack of attention to characteristics of the work setting that shape teacher learning and practice

• Absence of measures and data about the environment for teachers

• Lack of consultation with teachers in quality improvement design
THEORY AND RESEARCH THAT INFORM SEQUAL

• Early childhood quality
• K-12 quality
• Organizational development
• Adult learning and change
• Cognitive science and adult well-being
• Economics and poverty
HOW WE DEVELOPED SEQUAL
PHASE 1

- Interdisciplinary literature review
- Examined existing questions/instruments
- Convened experts to generate domains
- Conducted focus groups
- Developed initial version for piloting
- Solicited feedback from teaching staff, directors and experts
- Conducted statistical analyses
- Reduced length and revised questions for next iteration
HOW WE DEVELOPED SEQUAL
PHASE 2

• Conducted validation studies:
  • Head Start programs in three states (30 programs, 200 teaching staff approximately)
  • Mix of programs in QRIS in one state (72 programs, approximately 600 teaching staff)

• Conducted series of analyses using both samples to establish validity and reliability of SEQUAL

• Based on analyses, made revisions for next iteration, now being tested
HOW SEQUAL WORKS

• Online survey completed by each member of the teaching staff
  • Ten to fifteen minutes completion time
  • Available in English and Spanish
  • Includes questions that capture demographics and career history

• Online survey completed by directors (or agency staff)
  • Completion time dependent on center size/number of sites
  • Includes questions that capture:
    • Program characteristics
    • Director demographics and career history
TEACHING STAFF AND DIRECTOR
DEMOGRAPHIC AND CAREER QUESTIONS

• About job and career characteristics
  • Job title, tenure, etc.

• About educational preparation
  • Professional development supports, highest level of education, etc.

• About demographics
  • Age, gender, race, linguistic background, etc.

• About family characteristics and income status
  • Number of children, household income, relationship status, health insurance, use of public income supports, etc.
QUESTIONS FOR DIRECTORS ABOUT THEIR PROGRAM

Staff
- Teaching staff
- Turnover
- Education
- Training
- Pay
- Tenure

Children
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Subsidies

Specific program policies
- Curriculum and assessment,
- Health benefits
Sample Questions

Rate the following statements about being paid for different tasks on a scale of 1-6, with a 1 indicating strongly disagree and 6 strongly agree. If the task is not included in your job duties, answer based on what you think would be likely if it were.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>1 - Strongly disagree</th>
<th>2 - Disagree</th>
<th>3 - Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>4 - Somewhat agree</th>
<th>5 - Agree</th>
<th>6 - Strongly agree</th>
<th>Decline to answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can depend on being paid for attending center staff meetings outside my regular work hours (10b1)</td>
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<td>I can depend on having planning time during my paid work week (e.g., paid time before children arrive or after they leave, or when I am relieved by a floater) (10b2)</td>
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<td>I can depend on being paid for work outside of regular work hours (e.g., home visits, parent conferences, celebrations, evening or weekend events) (10b4)</td>
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CURRICULUM:
A curriculum guides what and how children are taught. The curriculum may be developed by your program or by another group (e.g., High/Scope, Curiosity Corner, Creative Curriculum, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Bank Street).

CHILD OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT:
During child observations and assessments, teachers gather information about children’s development. Teachers use this information to plan appropriate learning experiences. A child assessment or observation process may be developed by your program (e.g., ongoing observational records, checklists) or have a specific name (e.g., Child Observation Record of High Scope, Work Sampling System).
MATERIALS:
Materials help staff teach children effectively. These include large and small equipment (e.g., climbing structures, books, blocks), supplies (e.g., paintbrushes, paint), and resources for teaching staff (e.g., computer, reading materials).

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:
Support services help teaching staff to meet the needs of children and families in their classroom.

STAFFING:
Staffing is about having enough people (teachers, assistants, floaters, directors) to meet children’s needs and to allow teaching staff to complete their tasks.
LEARNING COMMUNITY DIMENSIONS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:
Professional development activities are available to help you learn and improve your teaching. These activities may or may not be required by your job.

APPLYING LEARNING:
Applying learning is about trying new ways to teach and sharing ideas with other teaching staff.
MAKING DECISIONS IN YOUR CLASSROOM:
Making decisions refers to the choices you can make about your work.

TEAMWORK:
Teamwork is working with others toward a common goal. Here teamwork is about you and the other teaching staff in your classroom.

INPUT INTO YOUR WORKPLACE:
Input into your workplace is about your opportunities to be involved in making decisions about program policies.
ADULT WELL-BEING DIMENSIONS

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING:
Economic well-being is about your pay and benefits and your overall financial concerns.

WELLNESS SUPPORTS:
Wellness is about policies at your work place to prevent staff injury and illness, and support good health.

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE:
Quality of work life is about your rights on the job and the relationships among teaching staff in your program.
SUPervisor:
The following questions refer to the person who directly supervises your teaching (e.g., this could be a head teacher, educational coordinator, principal, or site supervisor). The person may or may not teach in your classroom on a regular basis.

LEADER:
The following questions refer to the person who is responsible for overall daily operations in your center, school, or site. This may be a different person or the same person as your supervisor (e.g., this could be a director, principal, or site supervisor).
Teaching Staff Participation in Professional Development Opportunities

- Single topic, one-session trainings (n=614): 86.5%
- In-depth (multiple sessions on a topic) training, held either on-site or off-site (n=611): 61.5%
- College course related to my job (n=611): 42.1%
- Meeting with a mentor, coach or consultant (n=604): 41.1%
- Professional conference (n=605): 37.4%
- Discussion about professional articles/books (n=608): 35%
- Visit to other classrooms or centers to observe teachers (n=610): 32.8%
Economic Well-Being: Pay & Job Duties

- Being paid for attending center staff meetings that are held outside my regular work hours: 31.2%
- Being paid for late child pick-up if I am working at the end of the day: 37.5%
- Having planning time during my paid work week: 40.0%
- Being paid for required professional development or training activities: 44.7%
- Being paid for work outside of regular work hours: 49.7%
SEQUAL AND CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Questions

• Why are you drawn to SEQUAL?

• How are you using SEQUAL?

Discussants

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Assessing What Teachers Need to Help Children Succeed

CORE USES OF SEQUAL FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Research/Policy
- Used by researchers in understanding the interplay between teacher education, the work environment and efforts to improve program quality and facilitate children’s learning
- Used by policymakers to inform decision making and guide resource allocations

Technical Assistance
- Used by directors, mentors, and coaches to:
  - Assess how the adult work environment supports or impedes effective teaching practices
  - Guide improvements to program policies, practices, and relationships necessary for teacher development

Education
- Introduces center leaders, teacher educators, and trainers to theories, concepts, and best practices related to promoting teacher growth and development
- Raises awareness among current and prospective teaching staff about supportive work environments
Thank you!

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Questions, Reflections, Comments?
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The PowerPoint and related materials will be posted on the QRIS NLN website under Webinars:
http://qrisnetwork.org/webinars